

REMARKS

Claims 1-9, 11-24, and 31-36 remain pending in the application. Claims 10, and 25-30 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter thereof.

Reconsideration of the rejections and allowance of the pending application in view of the foregoing amendments and following remarks are respectfully requested.

In the Official Action claims 1-3, 6-14, 17-20, 23-26, 29-32 and 35-36 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Satoh et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,282,977 ("Satoh"), and claims 4-5, 15-16, 21-22, 27-28 and 33-34 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Satoh in view of Higashino et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,143,402 ("Higashino"). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Independent claim 1 has been amended to more clearly define a structural feature of an embodiment and to more clearly distinguish over the applied prior art references by further reciting that the lock slider is provided with a guide groove configured to detachably receive the operation lever therein. No new matter is believed to be introduced by the present amendment. In this regard, the Examiner's attention is directed to, inter alia, Fig. 7 of Applicant's application.

It is a feature of an embodiment to provide a tilt steering apparatus for a vehicle having a separated operation lever and lock slider, whereby the lock slider makes only a rectilinear motion when the operation lever operates.

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To achieve the above-noted feature, a tilt steering apparatus for a vehicle of the present invention, as recited in amended claim 1, includes, inter alia, a lower bracket mounted on a steering column, a fixed gear formed on a bottom surface of the lower bracket, a movable gear having a top surface toothed to the fixed gear, the movable gear being pivotably movable on a hinge formed at one side thereof, a lock slider that disengagably locks the movable gear to the fixed gear, a support bracket that supports the lock slider, an operation lever having one side hinged for rotation, and a motion converter that converts a rotational motion of the operation lever to a rectilinear motion of the lock slider. Further the lock slider is provided with a guide groove configured to detachably receive the operation lever therein.

Applicant respectfully submits that the references relied upon in the rejections under 35U.S.C. 102(b) and 103(a), considered singly or in any proper combination, do not disclose such a combination of features.

In comparison, in the Sato reference the wedge member 33 does not include such a guide groove as noted above, although Satoh includes the wedge member 33 and the operation arm 34. Also, the wedge member 33 and the operation arm 34 appear to be provided in a unit, while the guide groove 164 and the operation lever 150 of the present invention are not in a unit. (see, Fig. 2 and column 8, lines 29-42 of Sato).

The Examiner appears to assert that the guide groove is disclosed at reference numeral "32" of Satoh. However, Applicant notes that reference number "32" in Satoh indicates a movable gear which is not related to the guide groove of the present

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embodiment.

With regard to the Higashino reference, the Examiner has addressed the long holes 31 formed in the two supporting plates 28. However, Applicant notes that the supporting plates 28 are not relevant elements to the guide groove of the present embodiment.

Thus, Sato does not anticipate the present invention or render the presently claimed invention unpatentable. Also, even assuming, arguendo, that the teachings of Sato and Higashino can be properly combined, the asserted combination of Sato and Higashino would not result in the invention as recited in amended independent claim 1.

Claims 8, and 13-18 are also rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph as based on a disclosure which is not enabling with regard to a recitation "downward refraction portion 124".

Claims 8-10, and 13-30 are also rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph as being indefinite because, in the Examiner's opinion, "the downward refraction portion" in claims 8 and 13-18 is unclear as to where it is located and what the function of it is, "the other side" in claims 9, 10 and 19-30 lacks antecedent basis, and the definitions of "one side" and "the other side" are unclear.

The drawings are objected to for failing to comply with 37 CFR 1.84(p)(5) with regard to downward refracted portion 124 and reference numeral 164.

With regard to the indefiniteness of "one side" and "the other side" in the rejection under 35 U.S.C. 112, Applicant has amended claims 9, and 19-24 to delete "one side of" therein, and deleting claims 10, and 25-30.

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With regard to the "downward refraction portion 124" in the rejection under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph and the objection of the drawings, Applicant has amended the specification to change "refracted" to --deflected--and insert "(similar to 32C of fig. 1)" after reference numeral "124" in the line 14 of page 7, and to amend fig. 5 to include numeral 124. Also, Applicant has amended Fig. 5 to insert reference numeral "124" therein.

With regard to the reference numeral 164 in Fig. 9a in the objection of the drawings, Applicant has amended the specification to insert --as shown in Fig. 9b-- after "other, and" in page 9, line 8.

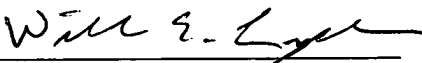
Any amendments to the claims which have been made in this amendment, and which have not been specifically noted to overcome a rejection based on prior art, should be considered to have been made for a purpose unrelated to patentability, and no estoppel should be deemed to be attached thereto.

Based on the above, it is respectfully submitted that this application is now in condition for allowance, and a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

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Should the Examiner have any questions or comments regarding this response, or the present application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,  
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Attachment: 1 Replacement Sheet of Drawings

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IN THE DRAWINGS

The attached sheet of drawings, which includes Figs. 5 and 6, replaces the original sheet including Figs. 5 and 6. In amended Fig. 5, reference numeral "124" is inserted.

Attachment : Replacement Sheet